

IN THE MATTER OF INTEREST ARBITRATION

BETWEEN )  
)  
WARREN COUNTY, IOWA, )  
)  
PUBLIC EMPLOYER, )  
AND )  
)  
TEAMSTERS LOCAL 238(Sheriff's Unit), )  
)  
EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION. )

Hugh J. Perry, Arbitrator

Award issued:  
July 6, 2006

APPEARANCES:

FOR WARREN COUNTY:  
Jack Lipovac - HR OneSource

FOR TEAMSTERS LOCAL 238:  
Mike Stanfill - Business Representative

BACKGROUND

Teamsters Local 238 represents a bargaining unit of 30 Warren County employees employed in its Sheriff's Department, including deputies, jailers/dispatchers and secretaries. The parties are in a 2 year contract, July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2007 which provides for a re-opener to bargain Wages and Insurance. The parties have agreed to bypass Fact-finding and extend the impasse time-lines to allow for completion of the bargaining process. They agree that this award will be retroactive to July 1, 2006. A hearing was held at the Warren County Courthouse on June 21, 2006. The arbitrator is required to select the position of the party on each impasse issue deemed the most reasonable after considering the criteria set forth in section 20.22(9) of the Public Employment Relations Act.

COMPARABILITY

The parties are in agreement on a comparability group with one exception. They agree that the counties of Jasper, Webster, Muscatine, Clinton, Marshall, Cerro Gordo, Dallas, Wapello, Des Moines and Lee should be used. These are the Iowa counties nearest in population to Warren. The County also uses Marion County.

IMPASSE ISSUES

The impasse issues to be decided are **Wages** and **Insurance** for the contract year

July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. All other issues are settled as part of the two year agreement dating from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2007.

## **CURRENT CONTRACT**

**Wages** - The contract provides for the following wages (hourly):

### **Sergeants and Patrol**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Start  | \$19.27 |
| Deputy 4 (after 1 year of continuous service)  | \$20.26 |
| Deputy 3 (after 2 years of continuous service) | \$20.57 |
| Deputy 2 (after 3 years of continuous service) | \$20.81 |
| Deputy 1 (after 4 years of continuous service) | \$21.02 |
| Sergeant                                       | \$21.57 |

### **Dispatchers**

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Start          | \$15.73 |
| End of 1 year  | \$16.42 |
| End of 2 years | \$17.13 |
| End of 3 years | \$17.80 |

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Computer Administrator</b> | \$18.33 |
|-------------------------------|---------|

### **Jailer/Dispatcher**

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Start          | \$16.16 |
| End of 1 year  | \$16.84 |
| End of 2 years | \$17.51 |
| End of 3 years | \$18.18 |
| End of 4 years | \$18.86 |

### **Clerks**

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Start          | \$12.84 |
| End of 1 year  | \$13.30 |
| End of 2 years | \$13.85 |
| End of 3 years | \$14.38 |
| End of 4 years | \$14.93 |

The parties agreed to a split wage increase last year with 2% effective July 1, 2005 and an additional 4% effective January 1, 2006. The issue to be resolved here is the percentage of increase to be applied to these wages effective July 1, 2006 (and January 1, 2007 should the Union prevail).

**Insurance** - Currently the County pays the full premium for the health, dental and vision insurance for an employee and his/her family **or** up to \$650.00 per month, whichever is less. The County carries its health insurance with John Deere Health and Principal Life Company. Three different health insurance plans are offered: 1) 053H \$626.58 single/\$1,510.01 family 2) 026G- \$361.11 single/ \$870.27 family 3) 06U4 (\$243.36

single/ \$587.70 family. In addition to the health insurance, dental and vision insurance (\$23.32/single and \$62.30/family) is offered these employees. The County has changed insurance plans somewhat for next year in order to contain premiums. These plans have increased deductibles, co-insurance, office visit co-pays and out of pocket maximums over previous plans offered. The County was looking at premium increases of 29% before such benefit changes. After the changes the premium increase is 4.67%. With these changes, the County will be able to offer the least expensive family plan with dental and vision insurance for \$684.21 per month.

## **PROPOSALS OF THE PARTIES**

### **Wages**

The **Union** proposes a 4% wage increase effective July 1, 2006 and an additional 4% effective January 1, 2007. In support of this asking, the Union pointed out that the elected officials in Warren County, including the Sheriff will receive a 10.8% increase this year and that assistant county attorneys received wage increases from ranging from 12 to 31 percent. The Union presented data indicating that employees in this bargaining unit were favorably paid with respect to their counterparts in comparable counties.

The **County** proposes a 4% wage increase effective July 1, 2006. The County noted that these employees are already paid favorably when comparisons are made with similar employees elsewhere and that most other settlements in comparable counties this year were coming in at 2-3.5%. It contended that 4% was a fair offer and that there was little support for the Union's 4%/4% asking.

### **Insurance**

The **Union** proposes that the current insurance plans and benefits continue and that the County be required to pay 100% of the cost of the family health insurance premium. The Union pointed out the insurance plan changes which included increased office co-pays and co-insurance. Most employees currently take the least expensive plan because its cost to an employee for the family health insurance benefit plus family dental and vision is within what the county currently provides for the insurance benefit, \$650/month.

The **County** proposes that the language insurance language remain in the contract *The Employer will pay either the full monthly premium for the health, dental and vision insurance, or up to \$700 per month for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, whichever is less toward a health, dental and vision program of the County's choice.* The County noted that there would be some changes to the plans offered, but that they were not substantial. Rather, they were necessary to moderate premium increases. The County pointed out the long bargaining history on insurance. There has always been a cap on insurance which has been negotiated from year to year as well as insurance plan changes to make this an affordable benefit. Moving the cap to \$700 will still allow these employees with families

to have a fully paid health insurance plan as well as vision and dental insurance. With this contribution toward its employees health insurance, the County exceeds most other employers, public and private in what it pays toward this costly benefit.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Wages** - The Union points out that other employees in Warren County will receive wage increases in excess of 4% this year. While this could be a factor in rendering a decision here, it cannot be the controlling one. Far more important is the relative standing of these employees versus similar employees in other comparable counties and the wage increases those employees will receive for the next contract year. This data strongly supports the County's wage position. These employees are favorably paid compared to their counterparts in other counties. Other employees will receive wage increases from 2-3.5%. There is little external support for the Union's asking of a 4% increase July 1, 2006 and an additional increase on January 1, 2007. The County's wage proposal, a 4% increase effective July 1, 2006 is the most reasonable proposal before me. It is awarded.

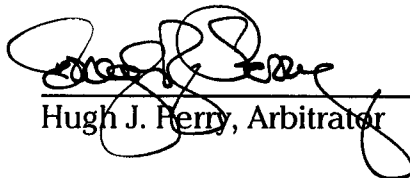
**Health Insurance** - Bargaining history strongly supports the County's Insurance proposal. The parties have traditionally bargained a cap on the County's obligation to pay for health insurance which cap has been moderately increased from year to year. The County's proposal to increase the cap to \$700/month for the next contract year will cover the premium for the least expensive family health insurance plan offered by the County as well as the cost of family dental and vision insurance. While there are some changes to the insurance plan, they appear necessary to moderate premium increases. This is an expensive and important benefit. It is unreasonable to ask the County to share in all of the expense of its relentlessly increasing premium cost. To have the County pay for the family premium in exchange for these employees picking up some additional costs when required to use their health insurance seems a fair exchange. The County proposal on insurance is the most reasonable before me. It is awarded.

## **AWARD**

**Wages** - County Proposal, a 4% wage increase effective July 1, 2006.

**Insurance** - County Proposal, increase cap to \$700 with plan changes as set forth in May 5, 2006 Memorandum from Board of Supervisors.

Signed this 6<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2006

  
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Hugh J. Perry, Arbitrator

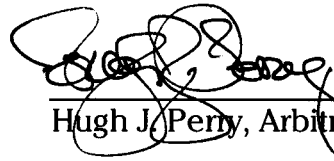
### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2006, I served the foregoing Award of Arbitrator upon each of the parties to this matter by mailing a copy to them at their respective addresses as shown below:

Jack Lipovac  
HR-One Source  
5619 86<sup>th</sup> Street  
Johnston, Iowa 50131

Mike Stanfill  
Teamsters Local 238  
2425 Delaware Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50317

I further certify that on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2006, I will submit this award for filing by mailing it to the Iowa Public Employment Relations Board, 510 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1B, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.



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Hugh J. Perry, Arbitrator